

*D. M. Condy Esq  
with his regards*

*129,*

AN  
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT THE



Pennsylvania College,--Medical Department,  
PHILADELPHIA,

October 13th, 1854.

BY ALFRED STILLÉ, M. D.,

Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY KING AND BAIRD, No. 9 SANSOM STREET.

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Pennsylvania College, Medical Department,  
October 27th, 1854.

DEAR SIR:—

It becomes our pleasure, as the representatives of the Class, to request of you, for publication, the Lecture it was our privilege to hear on the recent Introductory occasion.

With high esteem, we remain

Your obedient Servants,

CHARLES H. HALL, *Georgia.*  
FELIX B. GAUDET, *Louisiana.*  
FRANCIS P. TAYLOR, *New Brunswick.*  
EDWARD H. SHOLL, *Alabama.*  
ABRAHAM WELCH, Jr., *New York.*  
EDMUND J. BOWMAN, *Pennsylvania.*  
STEPHEN P. DENNIS, *Maryland.*  
JOHN H. BUDD, *Philadelphia.*  
JAMES B. LUCKIE, *Georgia.*  
EDWARD B. HICKEL, *Pennsylvania.*

To PROF. STILLÉ.

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*Philadelphia, October 30th, 1854.*

GENTLEMEN:—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. So flattering a testimonial must needs silence my scruples, and leave me no alternative but to comply with your request. But in placing my Lecture at your disposal I cannot avoid wishing that it were more worthy of your acceptance.

Be pleased, Gentlemen, to present my acknowledgments to the Class, and believe me,

Faithfully, your friend,

ALFRED STILLÉ.

Messrs. C. H. HALL,  
F. B. GAUDET, AND OTHERS,  
*Committee.*

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## INTRODUCTORY.

GENTLEMEN :—

This is one of the golden days in the calendar of your existence. It stands out among the rest as a conspicuous and shining date. To you it is the dawn of a new life. No step that you have hitherto taken was so momentous or so full of expectation as is that which introduces you into the novitiate of your future profession. You are about to consecrate yourselves to the culture of wisdom and humanity. But before the irrevocable step is taken your minds naturally revert to the past, and, while you gaze, its changing pictures pass silently before you.

Every portion of your life has been a period of transition and of preparation for a subsequent one, just as each that follows will prepare for its successor, and all together will only form the embryo stage of immortality. Life is indeed a mystery. Its beginning is shrouded in darkness, and its ending would be darker still, did the lamp of faith not throw its light beyond the grave. We see that it unfolds, like the flower from the bud, like the grain from the seed ; that like them its mortal part has its period of increase and of decay, but that unlike them its spiritual part grows continually, from the cradle to the tomb, and often reaches its loftiest stature and maturest powers when the body is about to return to the dust from which it was taken.

In vain you strive to recall the early dawn of life, when you were wholly dependent on a mother's care ; when tears and smiles chased each other like clouds and sunshine on a summer day, leaving no trace behind. Perhaps you can remember the boyish frolics of the following years, before any voice recalled you from the butterfly-chase to con your unwelcome task. Then followed a period when you began to feel a craving for knowledge, a hunger and thirst of the mind, no less keen and pressing than these appetites of the body ;—when you felt new wants, and first became conscious that a vast world lay beyond the narrow horizon of your sight ;—when you heard of distant countries and peoples, of wars by land and sea, and even of other worlds than this. Such strange revelations filled your imagination with visions of the unseen, and your hearts with a tumult of mysterious hopes. Still, the joys and sorrows of the

passing hour absorbed nearly all your interest, and little did you reckon what a day might bring forth. But with adolescence came a wondrous change. Your eyes, that had seldom looked beyond the horizon of that narrow circle which bounds immediate and temporary relations, now gazed habitually upon the distant and the future; you seemed to have reached an eminence in the path of life from which you could look far forward along its course and catch glimpses of objects so bright and beautiful that at sight of them your pulses quickened, and you panted with eager enthusiasm. A prize allured you onward; you had a motive for exertion, and the future struggled with the present in your affections.

How intense the enjoyment of those days! days when the keen appetite for pleasure was only equalled by the thirst for knowledge; when sports and books, by turns, absorbed your whole soul—when you were as ardent in the class-room as on the play-ground—as strenuous in your efforts to outstrip some rival scholar, as to overthrow the champion of the college green. The spur of your own ambition then quickened your exertions much more than the commands of your teacher. And to what efforts did it not urge you! In reveries by day, and in dreams by night, you sat at the feet of those great masters of wisdom, whose genius or learning had swayed the civilized world, and as you drank in their inspired words, you yearned for the right to sit among that illustrious band and share their power over mankind. This craving for power, the grand, universal, and determining motive of all extraordinary achievements was alive and active in your bosoms, and henceforth became your ruling principle, whether it nerved you for the immediate conflict, or raised you aloft upon the wings of imagination to heights whence you could behold the toils, and trials and rewards of your coming life.

But your college days, like those which preceded them, came to an end. The happiest period of your existence closed. The band of young men whom common pursuits, common interests, and the golden chain of true and ardent friendship had so long united, who had so long sat side by side, conned the same tasks, shared the same sports, and cherished the same hopes, as if they were members of the same body,—this magic band fell asunder. The old and common principle of mutual attraction seemed all at once to fail, or rather to display its



power after an unwonted fashion. The united brotherhood of classmates was divided into many groups, and each one departed from the collegiate halls in a different direction. One hastened to the busy mart; one to till the calm and wholesome fields; one to the tempting bowers of literary ease, or to the feverish struggle of literary toil; one to the noble science of law; one to the venerable and consecrated studies of theology; and one came hither to learn what ills our flesh is heir to, and the power of art to heal them. As in the ancient gymnasias, your education has hitherto been directed to develope and train all the powers alike, so that they might grow together in harmony. Now your discipline is to be that of soldiers who have a special duty to perform, for which a special training is required. Here you must learn to know and to use your arms, so that when you shall be dismissed to join your brethren in the field, you may feel a noble confidence in yourselves and an earnest devotion to the cause for which you are enlisted, that you may be ready to meet even the chances of the contest, to rest without arrogance upon well earned laurels, or offer yourselves, if need be, at the shrine of duty.

Such are some of the reflections which are appropriately suggested by your entrance into the vestibule of the vast edifice in which you are to learn, to do, and to enjoy so much. Were I to attempt to say *how* much, time would fail me as well as skill; but something I may tell you of the attractions that await you, something of the venerable majesty, and of the vast and various excellencies of the profession you have chosen.

Of all departments of knowledge medicine is the most comprehensive. Soul, life and body, with the external world, are its subjects. It is concerned with all of man's earthly conditions and relations. No other science has any such pretensions. To announce such a proposition may seem startling, no doubt, but it is, nevertheless, true. All other sciences are more partial and incomplete. Theology ignores the body of man; Law does not recognize his soul; and the Physical Sciences regard him only as a machine, or as a congregation of lifeless elements. Medicine alone embraces both his material and his spiritual nature, and writes his history from the time when the lord of creation is no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, to the moment when after having been the scourge or the benefactor of his age, he shrinks at last into a handful of dust.



Medicine is a composite science. At some point it touches all other sciences, and borrows from each wherewith to adorn and enrich itself. In the present age, when its principles are ranked, by general consent, among those of the inductive sciences, it is difficult, at first sight, to understand why it should have been so closely allied to metaphysics, both in ancient times and modern, and indeed until a very recent date. But such was the fact: so close was the alliance that it amounted almost to identity, for each dominant sect of philosophers was represented by some school of medicine, which explained the vital functions and the phenomena of disease, according to its own theory of life. A close approach to the same sort of connection may be noticed in modern times between medical systems and physiological theories. In the last century a dominant school explained all the phenomena of disease upon mechanical principles, for in them they seemed to find a solution of all the problems that concerned the natural actions of the body. At the present moment a large portion of the medical world confides in theories which chemistry has given birth to in its somewhat ambitious scheme of subjecting the phenomena of life and of disease to the same laws which govern the reactions among particles of dead matter. Thus medicine may occasionally suffer by its union with the sister sciences; yet it unquestionably derives from them far more benefit than it sustains injury. They enlarge its scope, and augment its powers: by widening the basis on which it rests they ensure its stability; they perpetually increase its tendency to assume a scientific form; and thus augment the difficulties of counterfeiting a knowledge of its mysteries, while they render its control over the causes and issues of disease more prompt and certain.

Such an object, then, as medical science may well oppress the mental eye with its grandeur. Regarded from whatever point of view, its vast proportions and extent fill the mind with reverence. Medicine is the oldest of arts, the largest, save one, of literatures, the most comprehensive of sciences, and of all pursuits the noblest and most humane. No mind, however capacious, can embrace so vast a subject, and certainly none can cultivate all of its departments with equal success. This has never, indeed, been done. But because medicine is so many-sided it is attractive to persons of all tastes,



and lends itself to the accomplishment of various objects. It is suited also to every grade and peculiarity of talent, from that of the unlearned practitioner, who sees but little variety in his sequestered field of observation, and needs but simple means in the ordinary exercise of his art, up to that of the renowned teacher who stands at the head of some metropolitan school or hospital, conducts a wide and diversified practice, and unfolds to others the mysteries of life, of organization, or of disease. An immense chasm separates the simple physician whose duties are altogether practical and confined to the domestic bed-side, from the præeminent man of science, the Galen, or the Hoffman of his age, whose opinion carries with it an almost religious sanction, whose doctrines are a law to his brethren, and are appealed to as authority by the whole civilized world.

Within the interval that divides two such extremes from one another, there are spheres, any one of which is sufficient to absorb all the faculties of the mind. Between simple routine and scientific knowledge, there are many grades of honorable and useful occupation, and a scope for all talents and all tastes. This it is, that forms one of the peculiar charms of medicine, one which has allured many into our halls, and even into our very ranks, who sought at first no other object than the gratification of a taste for knowledge. They were, perhaps, repelled by the dogmatic conclusions of theology, and the arbitrary principles of law, as much as they were fascinated by the perennial freshness and infinite variety of medicine. Unlike other departments of study, it is at once venerable for its antiquity, and charming for its immortal youth. Its form is dignified and hoary, but its spirit has all the vigour, and buoyancy and onward movement of youth. It commands acquiescence by the authority of illustrious names, and by the demonstration of recent facts. It has equal charms for the scientific, the literary, and the practical cultivator. The most logical may find in it full scope for their reason, the most refined for their taste, and the most benevolent for their feelings. It is, indeed, an epitome of all other knowledge, whether abstract and metaphysical, or whether material and inductive, or descriptive.

Even to the historical student, Medicine is full of interest. Its records are among the most ancient. We need do no more than mention the earliest of all, those Egyptian precepts which



are alluded to in the writings of Moses, and those hygienic and medical precepts contained in the laws of the Hebrews, and doubtless also of Egyptian origin, or to those equally ancient treatises, which are still preserved among the sacred books of the Indo-Asiatic nations, and of the Chinese. In all of these cases, medicine borrowed its authority from religion; its principles and precepts were held to have been supernaturally communicated to man, and observance of them was enforced by religious sanctions. So, too, in Greece, the cradle of our own medical science, the first conspicuous name on the roll of our profession was no less than a demi-god, Esculapius, the son of Apollo and the nymph Coronis. Between his epoch and that in which medicine assumed the form of a human science, much time must have elapsed, for the works which pass under the name of Hippocrates are clearly, and even avowedly, the expression of an existing condition of the science and the art of which they treat. Upon these, our earliest annals, the student of history may pause with wonder. In reading them, he will be amazed that so much of what is essential to the knowledge and cure of diseases should have been accurately known at a time when Germany, France and Britain, were inhabited by painted savages, and nearly two thousand years before America was discovered. As upon page after page he meets with descriptions and precepts which modern works have made familiar to him, he will for the first time understand something of the immense treasure which antiquity has bequeathed to us, and the grounds of that reverence which for so many centuries the world has paid to the name of Hippocrates. As he descends along the historic stream, and studies the writings of the Greek, the Roman, the Arabian, and modern European physicians, he will be amazed to find, that however much the current may widen and deepen by the constant accession of new elements, it still remains essentially the same. In every age, indeed, the face of the waters and the banks may have changed their aspect; little turbid creeks, the ephemeral inventions of the learned unwise, have for a brief space stained the surface of the clear waves, and then sunk to the bottom; tawdry and elaborate edifices have been erected upon the shore, in which some system builder has thought to dwell immortally,—but the great, steady, onward rush of the current has swept away their foundations and scattered their ruins.



The essential immutability of medicine, is one of its grandest features. It is one which our imperfect systems of education leave too much out of sight. The student is struck by the mutability rather than by the permanency of medical science, and thus one of the strongest motives that can operate upon the human mind, the love of stability, is altogether lost upon him. The true student of history, however, sees development in successive changes, and an advance towards that perfection of knowledge and remedial power which medicine has been constantly approaching. It is very true, indeed, that the progress towards this goal has never been uniform. At times, perhaps, the movement has even been retrograde. But the student will clearly perceive that an immense addition has been made to knowledge between almost any two epochs of our history, and at some, like the present, with marvellous rapidity. He will perceive that the phenomena of disease have at all times been described in essentially the same manner, and that improvements in the art of observation have depended less upon original sagacity, which must have remained almost unchanged, than upon the application to medicine of collateral aids drawn from other natural sciences. Thus, to cite a single and familiar example, the recent improvements in chemistry have multiplied phenomena for the investigation of the physiological and pathological inquirer. They have furnished new facts. They do not change the well established results of antecedent investigation, *they only explain them.*

In whatever age any truth may be added to the stock of positive knowledge, its existence is permanent. It can no more perish than matter can be annihilated. Even less changeable than matter, which may be resolved into its ultimate atoms and then recomposed in absolutely new forms, whatever truth represents a material fact is no less immutable than God, and is as lasting as the universe. Hence it is that the student of historical medicine enjoys a peculiar advantage. Inquirers into political or social history, find that it is marked by distinct and independent epochs, each one of which has its own stage of development, decline and decay, and is succeeded by an entirely new era, in which different elements combine, and evolve new forms. But medicine is the child of Time, and must advance from one stage of perfection to another, until Time itself shall be no more, and with mortality the ministers to mortal ills shall cease from the earth.

But there is much else of interest in medical history. War has occupied the largest share of the attention of the human race, and left the deepest traces in society, far deeper indeed, than the marks of those who have labored to spread the blessings of peace. And medicine, too, has had its polemics. The acrimonious quarrels of rival or opposing factions have caused more volumes to be written, and more skill and energy to be displayed, than were ever rallied to the cause of truth. And these violent and prolonged disputes have injured the cause of science no less than wars have hindered the progress of civilization.

Science is the child of peace. The voice of wisdom is only listened to when the din of arms has ceased. In the successive periods of conflict and repose, the historical student can trace the alternately bright and cloudy periods of our art. He beholds it slumbering in an almost death-like trance during the "dark ages" of Christendom, when its spirit seemed to have fled for an asylum against persecution and violence, or cold neglect, to the Arabians and the Moors. The school of Salernum, in Italy, was for several hundred years almost the only one of Europe, where some fitful gleams showed that the life of the medical body was not utterly extinct. But it has not bequeathed to us a single great name. During the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, scarcely one illustrious light is visible in the thick darkness. But towards the close of the fifteenth century, there appeared suddenly, and with a splendor like the breaking of a new day, a brilliant galaxy. This was a period of general awakening, and the same causes, doubtless, which produced a Henry VIII. in the political, and a Luther in the religious world, gave birth to Linacre, to Frascator, to Fernel, to Fallopius, to Sylvius, and to Paracelsus in the medical. Society had now received the form which it essentially possesses at the present day. As it developed itself more and more towards the substitution of the law of liberty for the caprice of tyranny, the number of cultivated minds grew constantly greater, and labourers in the fields of science were suprisingly multiplied. Periods did indeed occur, when the voice of learning was drowned in the shouts of battle or the yells of a mob. Such was the memorable one, at mention of which, Europe thrills even now; when demons of perdition seemed let loose to plague mankind; when to be a cultivator of the arts of peace ensured conviction of *incivism* and condemna-



tion to the bloody knife. Then, indeed, the adepts of our science hid like hunted hares, or fled, panic-stricken across the frontier of their devoted country. But when the tempest had declined, and the land had ceased to be a vast military camp, the nobler energies of the nation displayed themselves with unexampled power in the career of science. With rare intervals, and almost up to the present time, France continued to produce medical works of more profound research, richness of discovery, brilliancy of suggestion, and utility to mankind, than during any other equal period of her whole history.

One of the most remarkable features of human annals is, that certain periods have been distinguished by great leaders or rulers. Great men stamp their image upon their time. It is vain to plead the dogma of a natural equality of men. Nature gives the lie to such a theory, and points, for its refutation, to the renown of the very men who sanctioned the specious fallacy. Hero-worship is established by the common consent of mankind, and no amount of railing can do away with it. The age of Pericles, the Augustan age, the age of Louis XIV., and others, will still continue to be types of glory and objects of admiration. The care taken of men of genius by patrons of science, literature, and art, and the homage rendered in return have always been marks of a high civilization. In none but half-civilized countries do such persons lack national encouragement. The ruler who signalizes his reign by generous acts to men of letters is far surer than the military chieftain of attaching his name to an historical period. I know of no great warrior who has done so, but the distinction has been gained by one whose weapon was the crosier of St. Peter, and who is celebrated when we speak of "the age of Leo X." And we, too, have our kings and princes. Their reigns are to be measured by centuries and not by years, and their kingdoms are bounded not by mountains and rivers, but by oceans. Our sages of Cos and Pergamus, of Alexandria and Rome, of London, Paris, or Vienna, may vie with any that the pages of history commemorate for the extent, duration, and stability of their power. Kingly authority could not ennoble them, although it often conferred upon them rank, emoluments and power. It could not degrade them, though it sometimes persecuted and reviled them. They not only fostered science; they taught it by precept and example. They ruled by the

unseen but all-powerful sceptre of genius and learning over more nations than ever acknowledged the sway of Rome. And they were even more honored and obeyed when dead than they had been in the zenith of their lives.

There are some striking analogies between the history of the medical profession and of the popular element in nations. We know that anciently the masses of the people were degraded by political and social servitude. Domestic slavery, not of a foreign and dissimilar, but of a similar and even of the same race as the masters, was common in all of the republics of Greece, and also in Rome. For many centuries after the fall of the Roman empire, serfdom prevailed in Europe, and still exists in Russia. Now everywhere but among the Romans, whose warlike and rugged disposition could never receive the delicate polish of high civilization, the physician was regarded as belonging to the privileged classes of society and often received distinguished honors. Surgeons, it is true, occupied an inferior rank, and were employed to perform the manual operations which physicians directed. Anciently, they were nearly always slaves or freedmen, and indeed, until very recent times, had more in common with barbers than with physicians. To this day in England, the title of physician is higher, and his emoluments generally greater, than those of the surgeon, and the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians still form a professional aristocracy. But such distinctions are fast becoming merely nominal in England, and upon the continent are altogether so. Hence, it is evident that the medical profession and the community have obeyed the same general law by which classes that were formerly separated by distinction and privilege tend to be merged into a single one. He who would now rise above his fellows, must owe his elevation to deeds that deserve it.

In this country, where rank has never been legalized, neither birth nor social position gives claims to popularity or to political preferment; on the contrary, they are rather obstacles to political success. Every man who feels within him the genius to command, may, if he will but use the means, rise to whatever station he prefers. Chance or personal favor may hasten his elevation, or accident defeat it for a time, but if he strongly *wills*, he must succeed in attaining it. So, too, in Medicine. The aspirant does not as in other countries, find in every avenue



a barrier formed by his lack of preparation, his immature age, or his obscure condition. No where else is the best professional education so accessible to all who seek it. The vast numbers who annually resort to the schools are evidence enough of this. Of their subsequent career they are themselves the masters; the reins are in their own hands, and whatever goal they have the strength and resolution to reach, they must sooner or later win.

Yet the way is not smoother than the political arena, nor the rivalry freer from shocks and stratagems. The shallow politician, the trickster of popular favor, the great man's familiar spirit, the creature of accident, may sometimes glide into place and power. But far oftener the swift is the winner of the race and the strong of the battle. And thus in the medical commonwealth it may happen that the smooth and plausible deceiver, the crafty panderer to the sins and follies of patients, the cringing sycophant of doctors of renown, the oracular expounder of solemn nonsense,—or even the insolent denouncer of all science, the dealer in shameless imposture, the trader in nostrums, the brazen-browed quack, in fine,—may plate his sins with gold, and be worshipped by the people, as was the golden calf of ancient times. But his end is amidst the tortures of a guilty conscience, and the execrations of his victims. Apart from such as these, and above them in an atmosphere they cannot breathe, the great body of the medical profession, the true physicians, present an example of pure and noble aims, and of devotion to knowledge and benevolence, which bring their inseparable rewards, a clear conscience, the blessings of humanity, and a sufficiency of this world's goods.

These are only a few of the analogies which must occur to the student of general and medical history. But time would fail me to extend the parallel, and I turn to another phase of medicine. It is a science, and none other possesses attractions so numerous, so various, or so unfading. Though you should never feel a pulse, nor listen to the touching narratives of the sick, Medicine would still be able to absorb all of your faculties and affections. Physiology and Anatomy greet you with their wondrous revelations, tracing man's development from the microscopic point at which his existence begins, and leading you among the diversified and intricate organs that sustain his life and his relations with the external world.

Or with Pathology as a guide you may explore the ravages wrought by disease in the organism, and learn to detect the earliest changes in the normal condition of the textures, the mode of their development and of their interference with health or life. Or turning from such sad though preëminently useful contemplations, you may go where the trees wave and the plants bloom, whose roots, or bark, or leaves, or flowers, conceal the balm that assuages pain or makes the sick man whole. Or you may enter the laboratory, where the subtle essence of vegetable and mineral is evolved, to become a docile minister to humanity in your hands. Whether you roam the hills and dells in quest of the one, or eagerly watch the delicate process that is to evolve the other, you cannot but feel that the book of Nature holds no marvels more fascinating and no wisdom more useful.

Thus might I pursue the subject. For of all the natural sciences there is not one, except Astronomy, which does not furnish a field for the studious physician. Nor need Astronomy be absolutely excepted: for historically, and under the more mystic form of Astrology, this science was once the hand-maid of Medicine. The planets were thought to rule the phases of disease, and the full moon has been charged with many an outbreak of lunacy. But time would fail me, and I hasten on.

Gain, mercenary gain, may serve as a motive to study and practice Medicine. Health is the essential condition of happiness to nearly all men. Sickness is the privation, and death, in a worldly view, is the negation of happiness. Health, therefore, is a priceless treasure. No payment can be an equivalent for the preservation of health or life. Whether he who has been rescued from the flames or from the waves, present his deliverer with a penny or a thousand dollars, the reward is equally inadequate if measured by the service alone. Hence, it is that the fees of physicians are called *honoraria*, they are given as tokens of gratitude and respect, and not as equivalents for services rendered. To make use therefore of one's power over life and health to extort a price for saving either; to play upon the fears of the wealthy, the hypochondriacal, the victims of temptation or of sensual excess, in order to enforce a claim for exorbitant fees, is merely to act the part of a foot-pad, and, in almost the same words to cry—"Your money or your life!"

Medicine, it is true, is seldom a road to wealth. Physicians



too often spend their years in exhausting labor, and leave their children to fight the battle of life for themselves. Yet in spite of this their great need, nothing is so rare as an avaricious physician. Some have been grasping, but it was only that they might be prodigal. Wherever one has been both niggardly and rapacious, his brethren have shunned him as a monster, and he has lived a solitary and despised life. Although medicine must needs be practised for a livelihood—for even they who serve the altar must live by the altar—he is generally happiest and most successful who views his gains as an incident of his profession, and not as its leading object. His daily bread is sweetened not by daily toil alone, but also by a consciousness of having mitigated human sorrow, and sometimes by the sweet incense of grateful hearts. For the crowning charm of medicine is to be a benevolent art. If the most exalted genius, the most incessant and fatiguing toil, the clearest judgment, and the longest and most varied experience are necessary to perfect a physician, let it never be forgotten that all this talent, learning, and devotion, have no other object than the cure of the sick. And let not those whose fastidiousness is shocked by the scenes which fill the chamber of the sick and dying, sneer at the dignity of our office. None can be more dignified; for by precept and by practice it was placed first of human callings by the most exalted Being that ever trod this earth. Even among the heathen, as already remarked, Religion and Medicine were united, and the priest was also the physician. To the christian priesthood, too, we mainly owe the preservation of our literature and our traditions during the darkness of the middle ages.

Whoever is about to embrace the medical profession should know that, perhaps for many years, he must bestow the fruits of his knowledge and the resources of his skill, upon those who have little to repay them,—that after, it may be a life-long practice, he will have to reckon far more labor performed gratuitously than fully recompensed. If this prospect affright or chill him, the true spirit does not animate his heart, and he had better turn back while he may do so without disgrace. But if on the contrary, he yearns for the time when he shall have the power to arrest disease, to call back the departing spirit, to restore the babe to its mother, the parent to children over whom the dread doom of orphanage was hanging, the gifted and vir-



tuous citizen to the State,—then may we greet him with a hearty welcome, and predict for him an honorable name and station.

The good physician! how many of us can recal the portrait of such an one! Grave in his gait, simple in his attire, refined in his manners, his countenance radiant with a genial smile, or impressed with a winning seriousness that bespeaks sympathy with human sorrow, a man beloved and trusted in the domestic circle, whose sobriety of thought and demeanor inspire respect, whose habitual candor wins for him the honor of the learned and the reverence of the humble, whose hand follows secretly the promptings of his heart, and who neither extorts reluctant thanks from the surly boor nor from the humiliation of the fallen in rank or fortune:—such men there have been and such still adorn our ranks and dignify human nature. If not always the most renowned in the annals of science, nor most assured of posthumous fame, their names are nevertheless embalmed in the hearts of thousands; and doubtless those among them who have been gathered to their rest may see that, after all, they have gained a high and enduring reward, a reward denied to those who, while they enriched science by discovery, despised the blessing promised to “the man that provideth for the sick and needy.”

Gentlemen:—I have drawn for you a picture of the profession you are about to enter. Are its shadows here and there sombre and forbidding? Yes, but the lights are warm, and strong enough to make the gloom invisible and unfelt. Is the dedication you are about to make a solemn one? Yes, but it secures to you knowledge and power meet for the loftiest aspirations of the mind, a boundless field for the nobler emotions of the heart. Dedicate your talents and your hearts to humanity and then, whether in a public career you seek the title of Great or Good, or whether you glide through the more sequestered paths of literary labor, remember that for good or evil your fate is in your own hands. Be hopeful, and zealous and constant: let nothing divert you from your goal: let your hearts throb with a noble ambition to honor your name, your Alma Mater, and your country, to bless mankind while you live, and to earn their blessings when you die:

“Since all must life resign,

Those sweet rewards which decorate the brave

’Tis folly to decline,

And steal inglorious to the silent grave.”





